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Deepak Chopra's Buddha

You Gotta Have Faith

What would motivate a world-famous metaphysical thinker and author to venture into comics, first as a co-publisher and then as a writer? For the internationally acclaimed *Deepak Chopra*, it was all in the family...

According to Chopra, his move into comics "was actually a venture that was taken to *Richard [Branson]* and the Virgin group. My son Gotham and his business partners *Sharad Devarajan* and *Suresh Seetharaman* were—and continue to be—the real brains and visionaries behind this operation. They were the ones who came to me with the argument that India had too long been tapped as an outsourcer, but that they believed it was an untapped source of creativity and innovation. They had recruited talent—artists and writers—that very much proved their point. It was a privilege to be a part of their vision—and then subsequently to collaborate with another maverick and visionary like Richard."

What started as a publishing venture, however, became more than that. Early on, Chopra offered guidance on some of VIrgin Comics' books. That input has grown to encompass one series, ***Deepak Chopra's Buddha,*** based on his best-selling book; and another, ***Beyond,*** based on an original short story by Chopra.

Did Chopra's original vision for Virgin involve a move from the business side of comics to the creative side, or was this something that developed as the comics venture expanded? "I don't plan too much in my own life and rather like to simply witness the spontaneous unfurling of events and opportunities," Chopra explained. "In this case, I can specifically say that I never envisioned or planned on being a founder of a comic book company. But then again, I don't really think of it as *just* a comic book company; I see it as laboratory of creativity, storytelling, and mythology. I get to watch and witness as young creators tell their stories to the world—and that is something I *certainly* enjoy being a part of."

Buddha is inspired by Chopra's best-selling novel about the early life and transformation of Siddhartha; what led to the decision to reinterpret the work as a graphic novel? "The very first stories humans told were forms of comics—they were visual storyboard with hieroglyphics printed on the walls of caves," Chopra said. "To that extent, I have long been a student of the art form and this way of storytelling, and an admirer of those who do it so skillfully. I remain an author and novelist and story-teller at heart. Now to have so many wonderful artists and other writers available to me to evolve my work in other forms is invigorating and thrilling."

Chopra explained that the six-part series "explores Buddha's life in three phases: the Prince, the Monk, and the Enlightened Buddha. The first phase is full of mystery and adventure. The second focuses on Buddha's seeking the answers to his existential wonderings. And the third phase is about Buddha's enlightenment under the Bodhi tree and as well as his teaching."

How do the series present the young Buddha? "I present the young Buddha as he was: as an energetic, curious, and friendly prince who for many years was protected from the realities of the world around him on the orders of his father the king. However, as he reached adolescence and was exposed to some of the harsher realities of the world—including old age, sickness, suffering, and death—young Buddha began a new search that, in my mind, would change the course of human history."

"Readers will explore and discover the life of a prince surrounded with pleasure and everything that the world can offer to a human being. They will participate in his adventures and his learning of the martial arts, and the evolution of his complex relationship with two other boys. As he grows up, they will experience through his eyes the anguish of existential dilemmas and the anxiety that comes into a young man's awareness as he becomes aware of old age, disease, suffering, and death. Through his experiences, they will also experience the transcendence that comes from authentic spiritual knowledge."

Does ***Buddha*** fill in missing details of Buddha's life—and if so, how does Chopra develop those details while remaining true to the Buddha's essential nature? "There are a lot of missing details in Buddha's history. On the other hand, Buddha's life and his search for meaning and purpose in his life is the story that we all go through at certain points of our own lives. So when trying to understand Buddha's life, all I have to do is think of my own life, my own questions, and that is a good start."

Will the series leave room for sequels? "Metaphorically, I think Buddha's search for meaning and existence in his life is the same journey many of us are on. And to that end, I see his journey in every aspect of my own, in every work that I write. Literally, I am not sure where else I might take Buddha. While it was easy to imagine and fill is some of the blanks in his life, I am not sure I have a sequel in me!"

Does Chopra think his audience will recognize the significance of Buddha in world faith? And how will this series increase awareness of that significance? "Americans are now familiar with Buddhism, thanks to his Holiness the Dalai Lama and many other heralds and teachers of the Tibetan tradition of Buddhism. Buddhism also represents not only a great philosophical movement, but also a practical approach to understanding consciousness and its applications to personal growth and even the body politic. The recent protests in Tibet have brought Buddhists even more into the world's awareness and are influencing the foreign policy of many nations as it pertains to China. Buddha and his philosophies are therefore more mainstream than ever."

How has Chopra's novel been received by Buddhist and Hindu readers? "No matter where I go in the world, and no matter what I write on, I always find that I have both supporters and those that are critical of my work," Chopra said. "The same certainly holds true with people in the east, or with those who are practitioners of Hinduism and/or Buddhism. Those who agree with me that spiritual traditions are living, breathing organisms that apply and adapt to our contemporary societies are very supportive. Those who believe that religion is codified and should not be interpreted or looked at in context often find are bothered by my work."

Comics have dealt with stories of personal transformation and the attainment of greatness before; in light of this, what makes Buddha stand out? Is it possible for the story of a real man to compete with fictional stories of supermen? "Buddha, although a real life figure, is also a mythical being," Chopra said. "Over the last two millennia, many mythologies have evolved that contain magic, mystery, and adventure—most notably the modern mythologies of contemporary comic superheroes. Buddha's story, however, is especially attractive because readers will find that his journey is the stuff that all fiction can only dream of—that he was *real* and actually walked on this planet 2500 years ago and was not just the creation of someone's imagination."

Since Chopra's latest work, ***The Third Jesus,*** focuses on the life and teachings of another world-shaping spiritual figure, is it possible that Virgin might follow up ***Buddha*** with a series focusing on Jesus? "***The Third Jesus*** has been great to work on," Chopra said, "and I have learned a great deal not only about one of the greatest seekers to ever walk the Earth, but also about myself—because like Buddha, Jesus' story and journey is implicitly our own. At this very moment, I am indeed writing another book based on the life of Jesus. It's a fictionalized account based on the myth and legend and evidence surrounding Jesus' actual life. It's called ***Jesus: A Story of the Man who Would Be Christ.*** Certainly it is something that has the potential to be a comic series—and that's something I would be excited by."

While Chopra is the author of the novel on which the series is based, he is not scripting the comic adaptation. "A wonderful and talented writer, *Josh Dysart*, is scripting the comic. Not only has he adapted the novel very effectively, he's also brought a pacing and tone to it that is uniquely his own and that has been very gratifying to watch. Likewise, the art of *Harsh Kadam* has really brought the story to life in a special way. One of the great advantages of a novel is that a lot is left to the imagination. Obviously that is not the case with comics, so there is something daunting about it. But in this case, I really believe Harsh has delivered something truly wonderful."

As mentioned previously, ***Buddha*** isn't the only comics project in which Chopra is involved. "At present, through Virgin Comics, I am participating in some other projects as well, including an original story I created called ***Beyond*** that *Ron Marz* is scripting. Then there is an ongoing series called ***India Authentic;*** every month, we retell one of the classic Indian myths of the great pantheon of Gods and Goddesses. Lastly, I am involved in our epic ***Ramayan 3392*** series, a wonderful comic saga that is a re-imagination of the iconic myth of India called ***The Ramayan*** - best described as the Odyssey of India. Obviously, as a principal part of the company, I see my involvement in comics as lasting a very long time on all sorts of exciting projects."

Deepak Chopra's Buddha #1, a $2.99 comic, is currently available in comic shops; future issues will continue on a monthly basis, with the second issue tentatively slated for release next week.

by Cliff Biggers

Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

Comic Shop Newsarama

Produced by Comic Shop News in cooperation with Matt Brady and newsarama.com

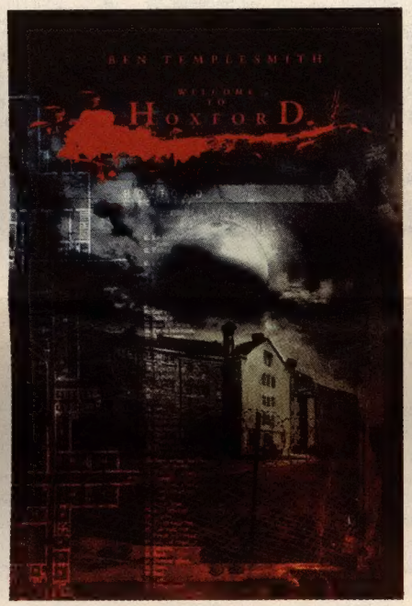
CSNsider

•So far, 2008 has been great for Legion of Super-Heroes fans: *Geoff Johns* brought the classic Legion back in a superlative story arc in ***Action Comics***, while veteran Legion writer *Jim Shooter* took over as writer of the new ***Legion of Super-Heroes*** series. So how does DC make Legion even *more* newsworthy?

By tapping *Geoff Johns & George Pérez* to produce a new five-issue miniseries called ***Final Crisis: Legion of 3 Worlds***, that's how! The series, which kicks off in August, will mark the first time Pérez has ever illustrated a Legion project. If you're not familiar with the Legion yet, don't worry: Johns promises that this series will be accessible for newcomers as well as veteran Legion fans. Look for more news on this project in an upcoming issue of *CSN*.

•Typically, when we report an artist or writer going exclusive, the story involves Marvel or DC—but *Ben Templesmith* has never been a typical artist! Templesmith has signed an exclusive contract with IDW Publishing, with whom he will produce new projects as well as his ongoing ***Wormwood: Gentleman Corpse***. The first Templesmith projects under the exclusive is ***Welcome to Hoxford***, which the creator will both write and draw, and ***The Art of Wormwood***. (The terms of the exclusive contract allow Templesmith to continue working with *Warren Ellis* on ***Fell***, which is published by Image.)

"I'm incredibly lucky to have been given the opportunity to continuously work at IDW over the years now and basically have them be the launch pad for anything I've ever wanted to do in comics," Templesmith said, "so I just saw this as a natural progression and a great chance to be more involved from the ground floor up. Also, the cubicle walls in the office are high enough that people still won't be able to see that I rarely wear any pants while I work."



Welcome to Hoxford presents Templesmith's distinctive take on werewolves. In the debut issue, Raymond Delgado, the newest inmate at the Hoxford Correctional Facility and Mental Institution, has no hope of release, parole, rehabilitation, or decent conversation. But Dr Jessica Ainley, his doctor for five years, wants to help Ray and can't understand why the newly privatized, corporately-run prison won't give her access to her patients. And why are people always transferred *into* Hoxford... but no records show anyone ever transferring back *out*.

•*Warren Ellis* has confirmed that he is leaving ***Thunderbolts*** with #121; he will be replaced by *Christos Gage* for #s 122-124, which tie in to ***Secret Invasion***, but there's no word as to whether Gage's run will continue beyond that. In a post on his message board, Ellis said, "The tenor--and, frankly, the informedness—of online comics conversation over the last five years has changed to the point where I probably need to explain once again why I don't stay long on company-owned works.

"It's as simple as this—if I don't own it, I'm not going to spend my life on it. Joe Quesada and Dan Buckley know that, they're fine with that, and they hire me on that understanding.

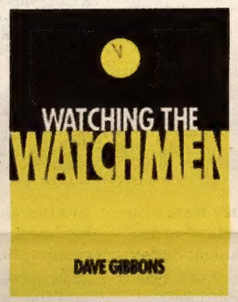
"Or, if you like: you can only paint someone else's house for so long before you start thinking that it might be nice to own your own house one day.

"I'm okay with painting other people's houses for short periods, because I'm good at it and it pays well and on nice days it's fun. But I never ever confuse painting a house for owning that house. And if I spent every waking hour painting other people's houses, I wouldn't be able to build houses of my own.

"The more creators who only took on housepainting as a part-time gig, the healthier this medium would be..."

(No word regarding the length of Ellis's run on ***newuniversal*** or ***Astonishing X-Men***, the two other Marvel properties he is currently working on, although he had initially indicated a twenty-four-issue run on the latter was likely.)

•Like director's commentaries? Want to know the story behind the story? Then *Dave Gibbons* has a book for you! ***Watching the Watchmen***, slated for fall release, is an insightful companion volume to the best-selling graphic novel, composed by none other than the artist himself! Gibbons offers his own account of the genesis of ***Watchmen*** in this hardcover, including excised pages, early versions of the script, original character designs, page thumbnails, sketches, posters, portfolio art, and much more. Look for it in October from Titan Books.



•Well, *that* didn't take long: ***Secret Invasion #1*** has totally sold out from the publisher, and the demand is so strong that Marvel is rushing a second printing into production. The second edition will feature a striking Avengers-versus-Skrullvengers image by *Leinil Yu* taken from the interior art; look for it next week. "I just want to say thank you to every retailer and comic reader who jumped into this with us," writer *Brian Bendis* said about the book's sellout success. "We have so much more to show you. This is just the beginning!"

•Voltron is about to return to comic shops in an all-new five-part miniseries. ***Voltron: A Legend Forged*** takes readers 1200 years into the past in a tale that reveals Voltron's origin. "As a longtime Voltron fan, this is exactly the kind of backstory I've always wanted to read, and I think it's going to turn a lot of heads," said Devil's Due's *Josh Blaylock*, who is writing the series. "It's true to the characters and the Voltron universe, and plays with the fantasy elements of this magic/sci-fi hybrid more than ever before." ***Voltron: A Legend Forged*** begins its monthly run in July.

•Marvel has also added a third variant offering to ***Secret Invasion #s 2 & 3***. In addition to the 1-for-25 *Steve McNiven* variant and the 1-for-75 *Steve McNiven* sketch variant, Marvel will also offer a 1-for-50 *Leinil Francis Yu* variant for each issue. ***Secret Invasion #2*** (and all the accompanying variants) are slated for May 7th release, while ***Secret Invasion #3*** follows on June 4th.

•Marvel will offer a 1-for-50 *Alex Ross* sketch variant of ***Avengers/Invaders #1***, slated for early May release.

•There may be hell to pay, but that payment has been deferred: DC has pushed ***Reign in Hell #1*** (originally scheduled for June release) back to July; the book will be resolicited in May.

•Sometimes a variant cover is so good that it's worth the extra cost—and *Frank Quitely's* cover for ***All Star Batman & Robin the Boy Wonder #10*** is a perfect example of that. "At first I thought it'd be fun to do my own version of Batman and Robin, fully intending to make my cover as different as possible, simply because that's one of the things you can get away with on an alternate cover," *Frank Quitely* told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Matt Brady*. "While I was playing around with the composition of what I wanted to be an absolutely iconic image of them, I started considering what it was specifically about the ***All Star*** dynamic duo that I liked, and that's the nature of their relationship - the impact this relationship has on Bruce and Alfred, on Batman and the rest of the league, it's a very loaded, complex thing... I've ended up with a piece that looks much closer to the established aesthetic of the series than I had at first intended. It's still my version, but it's my version of Frank and Jim's Batman and Robin." You

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can rest assured that this is one variant that's going to disappear very quickly after its April 30th release!

Coming Comics—Dark Horse in July

Mike Mignola joins with co-writer *John Arcudi* and artist *Guy Davis* to present the five-part ***BPRD: The Warning***. The team struggles to track down the mysterious gentleman who's been appearing in Liz's visions, as a slew of old enemies—from frog creatures, to the Black Flame, to the last remnants of Hyperborea—menace the Bureau *from all sides in a catastrophic escalation to* Armageddon.

Joss Whedon returns as writer of ***Buffy the Vampire Slayer*** with #16—and he brings the future slayer Fray along with him! On a hot tip, Buffy and Willow head to Manhattan hoping to unlock the secrets of Buffy's mysterious scythe, but something goes terribly awry when Buffy suddenly finds herself transported to an unknown world, and into the path of future Slayer Fray. This story arc is illustrated by Fray co-creator *Karl Moline.*

Wanna have a conversation with the dead? What more appropriate vehicle for such posthumous communications than a ***Buffy the Vampire Slayer "Conversations with Dead People" Board?*** This unique collectible includes a 17 5/8" x 12" board with a press-board planchette, along with instructions.

Conan heads back home in ***Conan the Cimmerian #1***, the kickoff issue of the new series by *Tim Truman & Tomas Giorello*, with additional art by *Richard Corben* and a variant cover by comics legend *Joe Kubert*. A stranger welcomes Conan home with a crack to the head, and another begins to weave a tale about Conan's grandfather—another Cimmerian who was filled with wanderlust.

Steve Niles & Nick Stakal follow a framed Cal McDonald as he's tossed in lockup in ***Criminal Macabre: Cell Block 666***, a four-issue limited series. This isn't your typical jail sentence, though, as forces both human and monster alike are lining up to make sure Cal's trip to the slammer is the last trip he ever takes.

Mike Mignola & Richard Corben follow Hellboy into the mountains of West Virginia in ***Hellboy: The Crooked Man***, a three-part miniseries. There, he encounters Tom, a man who in his youth sold his soul to a backwoods demon known as the Crooked Man. Together they travel back into the dark heart of the Appalachian mountains to confront that demon and see if Tom's soul can't be saved.

What if you had a magical superpower and... it hated your guts? That's the problem that confronts Matt Blurdy in ***The Helm***, a four-part miniseries by *Jim Hardison & Bart Sears*. When an ancient-looking helmet calls to down-on-his-luck Matt as "the Chosen One," exhorting him to don the mantle of the "Valhalladrim," Matt touches it with trembling fingers—and is jolted by raw magical power. Problem is, the helmet realizes that it has picked the wrong guy... but Matt's not taking no for an answer!

Jesse Reklaw ventures into dreamland in ***The Night of Your Life***, a 256-page hardcover that features strips adapting the many dreams submitted to Reklaw from all over the world, as originally presented in Reklaw's alternative strip ***Slow Wave***;

Dark Horse and ReelArt Studios join forces to present the ***Yankee Girl Statue***, a limited sculpture of the AC Comics heroine.

Dark Horse expands on its line of Spirit collectibles with ***The Classic Spirit 4-Figure PVC Set*** and ***The Spirit Sculpted Magnet***, both based on the work of *Will Eisner.*

The epochal epic storyline continues in ***Star Wars: Rebellion #15—Vector Part 7***. It has been twenty years since Darth Vader's encounter with the power of the Muur Talisman. As the power of the Rebellion grows, Vader's thoughts turn to the ancient Sith relic: though he was unable to harness its power, might it be used as a weapon against the enemies of the Empire? Luke and Leia are walking into a trap... one which may close on both sides!

Dark Horse collected editions include:

- ***Achewood: The Great Outdoor Fight***, a hardcover collection of *Chris Onstad's* online comic strip ***Achewood***;
- ***Astro Boy 1 & 2***, a double-sized volume combining the first two collections by *Osamu Tezuka* in one book;
- ***Barb Wire Omnibus***, a 320-page compilation of the bad-girl SF series;
- ***Conan Volume 6: The Hand of Nergal HC***, collecting the final uncollected issues of the first Dark Horse series;
- ***Criminal Macabre: Supernatural Freak Machine***, collecting the miniseries by *Steve Niles & Kelley Jones;*
- ***Groo: Hell on Earth***, collecting the miniseries by *Mark Evanier & Sergio Aragones;*
- ***Myspace Dark Horse Presents Volume One***, a 176-page compilation of material originally presented online—material by such creators as *Joss Whedon, Eric Powell, Gerard Way,* and *Mike Mignola,* to name a few;
- ***Nemesis Archives Volume One HC***, a 264-page compilation of the complete run of the ACG superhero saga featuring work by *Richard Hughes, Pete Costanza, Chic Stone, & Kurt Schaffenberger;*
- ***Nothing Nice to Say***, a 128-page trade paperback collecting *Mitch Clem strips* from the ***Nothing Nice to Say*** website
- ***The Perry Bible Fellowship Almanac***, the second Dark Horse collection of *Nicholas Gurewitch* strip;
- ***The Savage Sword of Conan Volume 4 TP***, collecting 500 pages of black and white Conan tales originally published in ***Savage Sword of Conan #s 37-48***;
- ***Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic Volume 4—Daze of Hate, Knights of Suffering TP***, collecting the story arc by *John Jackson Miller, Bong Dazo, & Dustin Weaver;* and
- ***Turok: Son of Stone***, an 88-page digest feature screen captures from the DVD.

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DEEPAK CHOPRA'S
BEYOND
Virgin
COMICS
ISSUE 1
OF 5

Top Comics for May

AVENGERS/ INVADERS #1 (OF 12)

Alex Ross & Jim Krueger (W); Steve Sadowski (A)

(Marvel MAR082168 $2.99; also available in an alternate cover edition (MAR083693 $29.99))

What's the Scoop?

The greatest heroes of the WWII Marvelverse are transported into the present, where they discover that the world has changed in ways that they never imagined. Meanwhile, the modern-day Avengers must come to terms with the "return" of Steve Rogers.

Why Should You Care?

Alex Ross & Jim Krueger, who've explored heroic icons in ***Justice*** and ***Project Superpowers,*** turn their attention two heroes of two eras in this time-spanning twelve-part saga.

FINAL CRISIS #1 (OF 7)

Grant Morrison (W); J.G. Jones (A)

(DC MAR080124 $3.99)

FINAL CRISIS SKETCHBOOK

Grant Morrison (W); J.G. Jones (A)

(DC MAR080125 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

For a year, we've been counting down to this big event... and now, the final movement of the ***Crisis*** symphony is about to resonate. What worlds will live? What worlds will die? And what is the nature of this cosmic threat to the multiverse?

Why Should You Care?

Grant Morrison & J.G. Jones begin his story with Anthro, the first boy, and he ends it with Kamandi, the last boy. And boy oh boy, wait 'til you see what happens in between! (And art fans will also be thrilled to get a sneak peek at *J.G. Jones'* stunning art in the ***Final Crisis Sketchbook,*** which ships two weeks before the series debuts.

FIREBREATHER #1

Phil Hester (W); Andy Kuhn (A)

(Image MAR082057 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

Being a high school student is tough enough for a normal kid... but the problems increase exponentially when your dad is a giant monster who has hopes that you'll follow in the family tradition!

Why Should You Care?

This clever, action-packed, quirky series by Hester & Kuhn gets a long-deserved return engagement. ***Invincible*** fans should definitely check this one out!

GIANT SIZE ASTONISHING X-MEN #1

Joss Whedon (W); John Cassaday (A)

(Marvel DEC072218 $4.99)

What's the Scoop?

Can the X-Men stop the powerlords of Breakworld from destroying the Earth? And which X-Man will fall during the struggle? Find out in this extra-length finale!

Why Should You Care?

Joss Whedon & John Cassaday say farewell to ***Astonishing X-Men*** with this issue—but they promise to go out with a bang!

HERCULES #1

Steve Moore (W); Imaginary Friends Studios (A)

(Radical MAR083922 $1.00)

What's the Scoop?

Alone in the world after the loss of his mortal family, Hercules and a band of six allies become mercenaries working for the King of Thrace in this dark, brutal reinvention of the Hercules myth.

Why Should You Care?

If the "***300*** meets Greek mythology" angle doesn't do it, maybe the stunning *Jim Steranko* cover will!

HOUSE OF MYSTERY #1

Bill Willingham & Matthew Sturges (W); Luca Rossi & others (A)

(Vertigo /DC MAR080225 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

Five unfortunate souls find themselves trapped for all eternity in a supernatural bar, unsure how or why they're there. Their quest for insight is the central storyline of this ongoing series, while the tales related to them by the bar's patrons form the "story within a story" segment of each issue.

Why Should You Care?

Each issue of Willingham & Sturges' answer to "Hotel California" also includes a framed tale illustrated by such top talents as *Bernie Wrightson* and *Jill Thompson.*

INVINCIBLE IRON MAN #1

Matt Fraction (W); Salvador Larroca (A)

(Marvel MAR082185 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

Tony Stark is confronted with an adversary with comparable funding as technology: Ezekiel Stane, the son of Tony's late business rival and arch-enemy Obadiah Stane, who's dedicated his life and fortune to the destruction of Tony Stark and Iron Man.

Why Should You Care?

With the upcoming ***Iron Man*** film shaping up to be one of the year's Big Events, a new all-access series like this one is just perfect for introducing readers to the comic book world of the Armored Avenger.

LOST BOYS: REIGN OF FROGS #1 (OF 4)

Hans Rodionoff (W); Joel Gomez & Don Ho (A)

(WildStorm /DC MAR080207 $3.50)

What's the Scoop?

Edgar and Alan Frog, the vampire slayers from ***The Lost Boys,*** return in a new adventure that shows what they've been up to since their film debut.

Why Should You Care?

With a film sequel, ***Lost Boys: The Tribe,*** slated to premiere this summer, what better time for a miniseries that bridges the gap between the two movies?

MAN WITH NO NAME: THE GOOD, THE BAD, & THE UGLIER #1

Christos Gage (W); Wellington Diaz (A)

(Dynamite MAR083588 $3.50)

What's the Scoop?

The taciturn, enigmatic hero of ***A Fistful of Dollars, For a Few Dollars More,*** and ***The Good, the Bad, & the Ugly*** makes his comics debut in this original series inspired by the Leone spaghetti Westerns.

Why Should You Care?

For more than forty years, Leone's film trilogy has entertained tens of millions of viewers—and that means there's an enormous potential audience for this, the first licensed sequel to those tales.

MARVEL 1985 #1 (OF 6)

Mark Millar (W); Tommy Lee Edwards (A)

(Marvel MAR082192 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

What would you do if comic book super-villains invaded your non-superhero world? *That's the question that thirteen-year-old* Toby will soon have to answer...

Why Should You Care?

Mark Millar gives the Marvel Universe its very own multiverse saga as heroes and villains from a comic book world threaten a world that knows them only as four-color icons.

RANN/THANAGAR: HOLY WAR #1 (OF 8)

Jim Starlin (W); Ron Lim (A)

(DC MAR080129 $3.50)

What's the Scoop?

Religion succumbs to fanaticism, fanning the flames of conflict between Rann and Thanagar to the point of conflagration in a drama that will involve Adam Strange, Comet, Starfire, Hawkman, Starman, the Weird, and other spacefaring heroes.

Why Should You Care?

If you want great cosmic drama, what better go-to guys could you ask for than *Jim Starlin* and *Ron Lim?*

SECRET INVASION #2 (OF 8)

Brian Bendis (W); Leinil Yu (A)

(Marvel MAR082203 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

Who's the real deal? Who's a Skrull? What's the big plan? And what's the religious undertone to the whole invasion? Anyone who read the first issue has lotsa questions—and the answers start here!

Why Should You Care?
Marvel's big event of 2008 continues—and it promises to outdo ***House of M, World War Hulk,*** and ***Civil War*** combined in its impact on the Marvelverse!

TOR #1 (OF 6)

Joe Kubert (W/A)
(DC MAR080147 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
Tor's struggles in a prehistoric world continue in this new series that blends prehistoric action with timeless questions of philosophy and morality.

Why Should You Care?
It's been more than fifty years since Kubert first presented the adventures of his prehistoric Tarzanesque hero--but each time he has revisited the character, Kubert reminds us why Tor is considered a comic book classic.

Collected Cool:
May's Best Reprint Volumes

BARKS /ROSA COLLECTION TP VOL 3: GOLDEN HELMET CHARTS COLUMBUS

(Gemstone MAR083727 $8.99)

This is the third "two-fer" set from Gemstone, pairing a delightful *Carl Barks* tale with a *Don Rosa* sequel. This time out, Donald battles Azure Blue for a relic that makes its owner king of North America; in the sequel, Donald and Blue struggle for control of The Lost Charts of Columbus.

EC ARCHIVES: TALES FROM THE CRYPT HC VOL 3

(Gemstone MAR083734 $49.95)

Six more EC classics (***Tales from the Crypt #s 13-18***) are reprinted in this wonderfully recolored collection that includes twenty-four stories by *Bill Gaines, Al Feldstein, Jack Davis, Graham Ingels, Al Williamson, Joe Orlando, George Evans,* and others. This is the series that changed the focus of horror comics and virtually defined EC.

INCREDIBLE HULK OMNIBUS HC VOL 1

(Marvel DEC072238 $99.99)

The stories that defined the Hulk are collected in this massive hardcover that includes ***Hulk #s 1-6*** and ***Incredible Hulk #102***—and in between is every Hulk tale from ***Tales to Astonish #s 59-101.*** Even better, this collection includes every pinup, every letters column... heck, it even includes unused covers, critical essays, and other bonuses!

JACK KIRBY'S OMAC: ONE MAN ARMY CORPS HC

(DC JAN080196 $24.99)

Jack Kirby's last major work for DC is collected in its entirity in this 176-page hardcover that complements the recently-completed ***Jack Kirby Fourth World Omnibus.*** In its pages, you'll find such familiar names as OMAC, Brother Eye, and Buddy Blank... and you can see how they relate to their current DCU incarnations!

STARMAN OMNIBUS HC VOL 1

(DC JAN080203 $49.99)

James Robinson & Tony Harris's revamp of the classic Starman concept is re-presented in this high-quality hardcover collecting ***Starman #s 0-16.***

Hot Commodities:
May's Hottest Merchandising & Collectibles

BATMAN VERSUS THE JOKER STATUE

(DC Direct OCT070261 $195.00)

DC kicks off a new line of statues featuring classic confrontations between legendary nemeses, beginning with Batman and his arch-enemy, the Clown Prince of Crime himself, as the Dark Knight tries to prevent the Joker from an Arkham escape. *Jonathan Matthews* does the sculpting honors.

LOKI STATUE

(Bowen APR084722 $200.00)

The Kucharek Brothers do the honors on this iconic interpretation of Thor's diabolical enemy... and brother! This sculpture, which comes with two interchangeable hands, is based on one of *John Buscema's* most famous illustrations from ***Silver Surfer #4*** (as well as another illustration derived from that classic image).

WOMEN OF THE DCU SERIES 2: BATWOMAN BUST

(DC Direct OCT070287 $55.00)

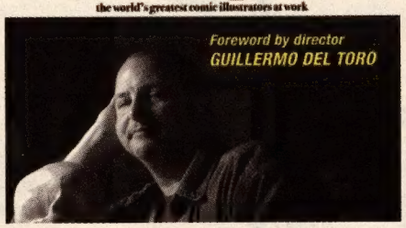
Jim Maddox does the sculpting honors on this interpretation of Batwoman, based on an original illustration by *Terry Dodson.*

FYI: GREAT ADDITIONS TO YOUR REFERENCE LIBRARY

STRANGE & STRANGER WORLD OF STEVE DITKO HC

(Fantagraphics MAR083707 $33.99)

Blake Bell offers an insightful, art-filled look into the life and career of one of comics most talented and most enigmatic creators, *Steve Ditko.* Sure, we know that he created or co-created such characters as Dr. Strange, Spider-Man, Captain Atom, the Question, Hawk and Dove, and Mister A—but his own life is every bit as fascinating as that of his creations.



STUDIO SPACE SC

(Image MAR082059 $29.99)

A look at the studios of some of the field's greatest talents, including *Frank Miller, Mike Mignola, Jim Lee, Joe Kubert, Tim Bradstreet, Brian Bolland, Walter Simonson, Dave Gibbons,* and *Tim Sale.*

Check 'Em Out:
Books You Should Be Reading

DEAD SHE SAID #1

(IDW MAR083765 $3.99)

Horror-meister *Steve Niles* joins with legendary illustrator *Bernie Wrightson* for a horror-noir tale that follows a detective whose quest into the dark side of the big city takes an even darker turn when he finds himself on the wrong side of a bullet.

DEAN KOONTZ'S FRANKENSTEIN VOL 1 #1 (OF 5): PRODIGAL SON

(Dabel MAR083610 $2.99)

Think Frankenstein's tale ended in the Arctic? Think again! *Chuck Dixon & Brett Booth* adapt *Dean Koontz's* tale of a modern-day Frankenstein in New Orleans in this five-issue limited series.

DEVI/ WITCHBLADE #1

(Virgin MAR084032 $2.99)

Concluding the Top Cow/Virgin Comics crossover that began last month in ***Witchblade /Devi*** #1 from Top Cow.

GEMINI #1 (OF 5)

(Image MAR082066 $3.50)

Jay Faerber introduces Gemini, a superhero whose identity is so secret, even he doesn't know what it is!

STAR TREK ASSIGNMENT EARTH #1

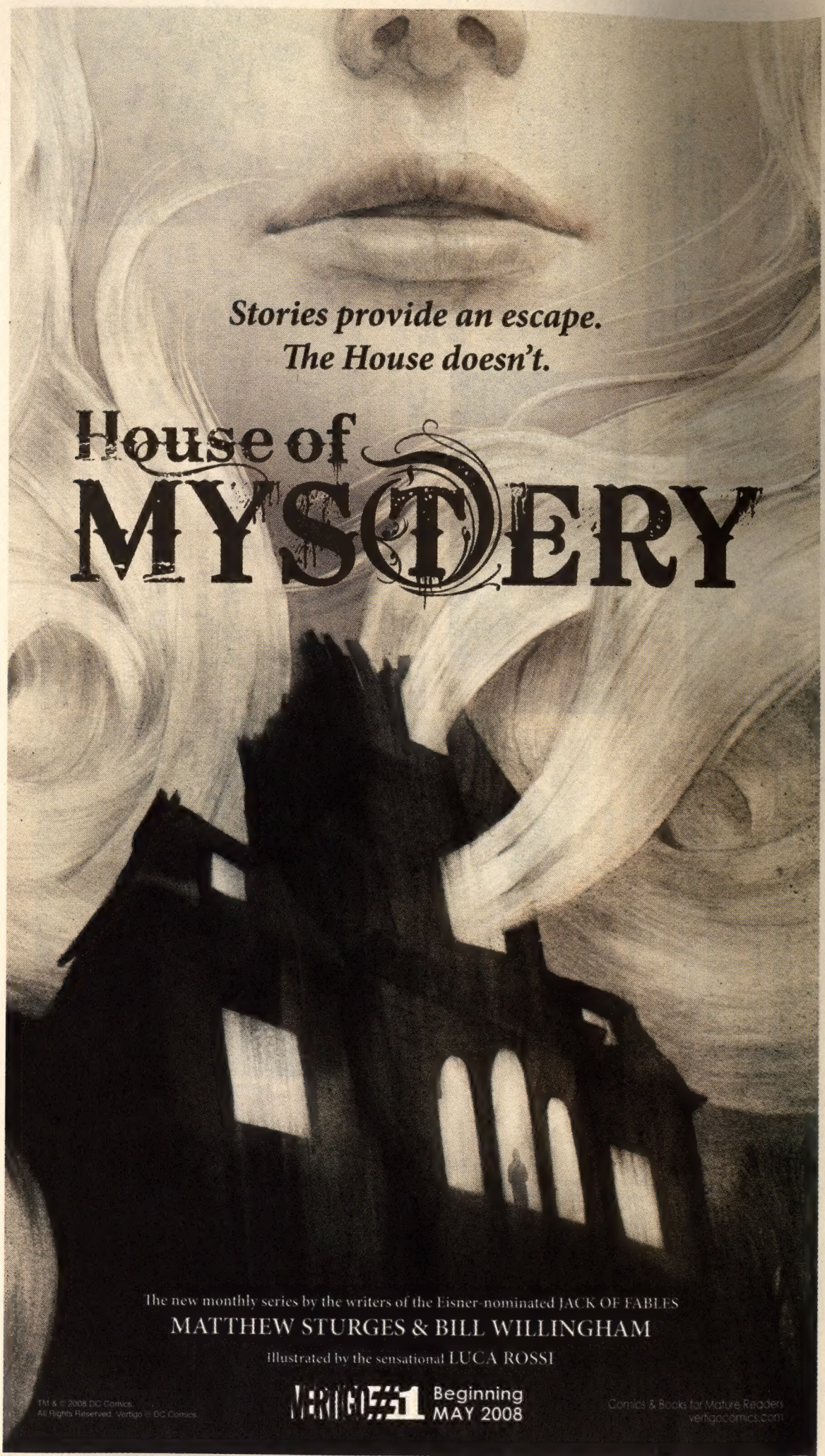
(IDW MAR083767 $3.99)

Gary Seven and his assistant covertly confront threats to the past in order to save Star Trek's future in this series written and illustrated by *John Byrne,* based on the "Assignment Earth" episode of the original ***Star Trek.***

WAR THAT TIME FORGOT #1 (OF 8)

(DC MAR080131 $2.99)

Tomahawk, Firehair, Hans Von Hammer, and a WWII pilot face off against dinosaurs on a deserted island in *Bruce Jones, Al Barrionuevo, & Jimmy Palmiotti's* clever reinvention of the classic "tanks versus dinosaurs" series from the early days of the Silver Age.


Stories provide an escape.
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MYSTERY
The new monthly series by the writers of the Eisner-nominated JACK OF FABLES
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Illustrated by the sensational LUCA ROSSI
#1 Beginning MAY 2008
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